

DORTON BUTCHERSHOP

MOUNTAIN STATES TELEPHONE OFFICE

Constructed: 1901

Address: 46 West Main

Present owner: Ronald C. Jones

In the world of commerce a son following in his father's footsteps is common. From the earliest days of Lehi settlement the name Dorton & Son was synonymous with meat markets. *The Dorton* was Joseph A. The *son* Joseph E., was best known as Jodie. Although other Dorton boys eventually entered the butcher business, none were as prominent in Lehi as Jodie.

Joseph A. Dorton, Lehi's first butcher, was sent here in 1857 by Brigham Young. In 1882, when Jodie Dorton was twenty-three, he and his father went into business together at the family stand (126 West Main). Four years later, when the elder Dorton's health failed, the business was relinquished to young Jodie and his brothers, George and William.

Local meat markets suffered a severe loss of business during the turn of the century when large numbers of Lehi citizens moved from the community, seeking their fortune elsewhere. "Lehi is becoming the city of homes without occupants," noted the local newspaper. "Some of the old timers say Lehi is the deadest it has been for twenty years," the paper added: "nervous people who need a quiet rest are advised to come here."

The success of the Lehi Sugar Factory had resulted in the building of new Utah Sugar Company plants at five other locations. Many local men, trained in Lehi's factory, moved to these areas to establish and operate the new facilities. Homesteading opportunities on the great fertile plains of southern Alberta, Canada, also attracted scores of Lehi farmers and ranchers looking for new and richer lands.

Jodie Dorton and his brothers experienced several collapses of their various shops during this time period. In the summer of 1901 Dorton purchased property from Sarah T. Evans at 46 West Main and built the last of his butcher shops.

This property had initially been the homestead of Anders Peterson who had built a fine old adobe house on the premises. His son John sold to Mary A. Powell in 1899. She, in turn, disposed of the place to Sarah T. Evans, who was the owner when Jodie Dorton purchased it on 16 July 1901.

Dorton maintained his meat market at 46 West Main until 1904 when he went into the poultry business. J.E. Anderson briefly leased the place from Dorton in early 1904 for a tailor shop. When he moved elsewhere, Maggie Bushman established a millinery shop there where she created fancy hats and frilly bonnets and scarves for the town's womenfolk.

On July 17, 1905, Rocky Mountain Bell Telephone Company purchased the property from Dorton and established their telephone central in the building. Florence Jones was hired as operator. She was responsible for handling local calls, while the more experienced Birdie Stoddart dealt with toll calls (long distance).

Scores of Lehi operators worked for the company until 1959, when the introduction of dial service eliminated most of the women's positions. To prepare for the switchover, Mountain States Telephone Company, the successor of Rocky Mountain Telephone Company, purchased property from George and Laura Strasburg at 26 South First West. They began constructing a new Lehi telephone building on 6 November 1958. At midnight, 9 June 1959, thirteen hundred Lehi dial phones went on line. Lehi telephone operators, and a local office where consumers could walk in and pay their bills, became relics of the past.

The old telephone building at 46 West Main afterwards served as a law office for Harvard Hinton (1959-77), and after than the Ken Rushton and Robert Gunn partnership (1977-1982). since then the building has been the office of Pine Valley Realty, then Tim Hillard Photography. The property is currently owned by Ronald C. Jones.